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# GAO Asked to Probe Alleged Diversion of Afghan Rebel Aid

*Scrutiny of Covert Assistance Program May Be Hampered by Secrecy, Jurisdictional Questions*

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Rep. William H. Gray III (D-Pa.), has asked the General Accounting Office to investigate allegations that hundreds of millions of dollars in covert U.S. military aid for the anticomunist resistance in Afghanistan has been diverted in the past seven years.

The request by Gray, chairman of the House Budget Committee, was made in a letter to the GAO on Feb. 25. Gray aides and GAO investigators will meet Monday to discuss the scope of the investigation, according to congressional sources.

Gray's office refused to comment on the investigation except to confirm the congressman's request.

The request poses a delicate political problem for the administration and Congress, as neither has ever formally acknowledged the existence of a covert Afghan program.

In addition, it is not clear that the GAO has the authority to conduct an investigation into a covert operation, such as the U.S. military aid program to the Afghan rebels. The Senate and House intelligence committees are the designated congressional oversight bodies for covert operations.

GAO Associate Director Joan M. McCabe said the Central Intelligence Agency has taken the position that it will not open its files to the GAO and will accept oversight only by the two intelligence committees.

"I don't think it's a case of legal restrictions on our authority, but we certainly have access problems [with the CIA]," she said.

She said the GAO has asked Congress for "clarifying legislation" on its jurisdiction over CIA programs. The issue also will be discussed at Monday's meeting with Gray's aides.

David Holliday, Senate intelligence committee spokesman, said the GAO had never been allowed to audit CIA accounts because of "a very large security consideration."

The U.S. aid program to the Afghan rebels, begun by the Carter administration, is by far the largest U.S. covert operation and is believed to total more than \$1.5 billion in military aid since its inception in 1979.

The GAO probe requested by Gray comes in the wake of persistent allegations by the Federation for American Afghan Action, a Washington-based U.S. resistance support group, that 70 percent of the \$342 million appropriated by Congress for arms between the fiscal years 1980 and 1984 never reached the fighters in the field.

Andrew Eiva, federation chairman, said he had "good documents" covering the years 1981 to 1984 to back up his charges and was prepared to share them with the GAO investigators. He said he had arrived at the figures on the basis of his talks about actual arms deliveries with leaders of the seven Afghan rebel factions fighting inside Afghanistan.

Eiva said that he believes the portion of aid diverted in 1985 and 1986 was "roughly the same."